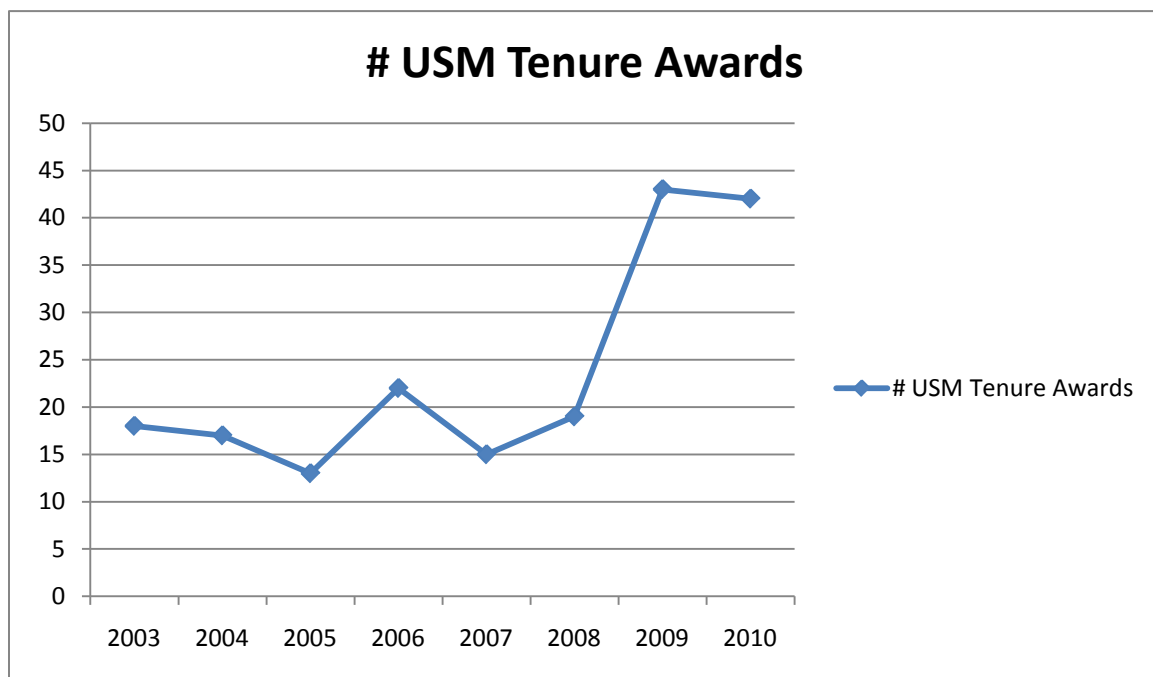


Tracking Turnover through Tenure

A Look at How Bad Leadership has Impacted USM

Regular followers of happenings at the University of Southern Mississippi are well aware of the damage done to the institution by the Shelby F. Thames administration (2002-07). Thames' tenure was characterized by scandals, beginning immediately upon taking office. Those scandals led to unprecedented faculty turnover during the 2002-07 period. That turnover suggests that USM would begin to see unprecedented numbers of tenure awards beginning in 2009, and carrying through to subsequent years. The figure below tracks the number of USM faculty awarded tenure for the 2003-10 period, using data collected from the Mississippi IHL's May meetings minutes from each year.



As the figure above indicates, USM is now operating at a higher level with regard to tenure awards, reflecting the enormous faculty turnover that occurred during the Thames administration (2002-07). Given that the academic records of those who left likely exceed those of *their replacements* – i.e., the newer faculty being tenured in 2009, 2010 and subsequent years – the figure above paints a bleak picture in describing what is happening now to the 100 year old Mississippi institution. And, the current budget-cutting climate, wherein USM will trim \$10-\$11 million for FY2011 and \$15 million or more for FY2012, suggests something even worse for USM's near future – that is a lower replacement rate of departing faculty. As faculty numbers begin to decline as a result of the budget cuts, the *real* harm done to USM by Thames, and Thames' disastrous hires like former CoB dean Harold Doty, will become even clearer.